

Practical Religion
Exemplify'd in the
L I V E S
O F
Mrs. CLISSOLD,
A N D
Mrs. Mary Terry :
With their
Funeral Sermons.

By THOMAS REYNOLDS.

L O N D O N ;

Sold by John Laurence at the Angel in the
Poultry, and William Laurence at the Three
Bowls in Rood-Lane. M.DCC.XII.

Practical Religion

W. Musgrave.

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OF

Mrs. CLISSOLD

AND

Mrs. Mary Tenny.



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Sold by John Lawrence at the Angel in the
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The Preface,

To my Loving People and Hearers.

Dear Friends,

I Ought to esteem those among the happiest Seasons of my Life, wherein I may be capable of furthering the Design of my Ministry amongst you, and of testifying the hearty Concern I have for your best Interests: For if I know Myself, there is nothing I desire more, than that Serious Religion may take place in my own Heart, and have a room in Yours. This was a principal Inducement to the publishing of what is before You.

It is now a considerable Number of Years I have been employ-

ing my Labours *for your Salvation*, which calls both you and me to inquire what Fruit has come of them; that if it has been with any Success, we may be thankful to God, and take Encouragement to go forwards.

I wish I could have serv'd you better, and would greatly lament it, if after I have taken some Pains, and had the Assistance of Others with me, it should appear there has been no Good done; but I thank God he has not allow'd me to make so sorrowful a Reflection. The following Accounts, taken from the Papers of TWO of your Number, who worshipped God with you, will deserve to be admitted as some Proof of his Presence in his Ordinances: and I am satisfy'd there have been, and are more that might be added to them.

I am glad, for your sakes, that I can propose such *Examples* to you; and it would increase my Joy to find they have any Influence to enkindle in your Breasts such a holy Zeal, as shall not only put you upon imitating them, but provoke your Emulation.

The Lives and Examples of others, besides the Pleasure they give in reading, have a singular Advantage above that of naked Precepts; for they not only instruct us in our Duty, as the others do, but show us also the Practicableness of it, and thereby have a mighty force in putting us upon doing the like things our selves, when we see them already done before us.

Of all Examples those seem to be most exciting that are within our own Time and Knowledg; wherefore I have the more reason,
with

with God's Blessing, to expect some Good from the Examples I here present, because they were known to many; and as you have like Capacities, Means and Privileges, why should you not hope to equal them in their Graces too?

I have thought it a special Providence, that altho I long since design'd to have publish'd what relates to One of them, I was prevented till the Death of the Other gave me this Opportunity. I am now well pleas'd in joining them together, partly for the entertaining Variety they will give the *Readers*, partly for the useful Observations they may be led to make, when comparing them together; as also for other good Ends which may be subserv'd thereby.

It should be observ'd, there was a considerable difference in the Age
of

of these two Persons; for whereas the One died in the *Twenty Ninth*, the Other had not compleated the *Eighteenth Year* of her Life. This Allowance being made, I believe they will both be equally admir'd; the one for her publick-Spiritedness and Zeal, the other for her Solidity and Judgment.

I crave leave further to remark, That the Foundation of their eminent Piety was laid, by God's Blessing, in the Instructions and good Example of those to whose Care they were committed. This should encourage Parents, and those who have the Care of Youth, to discharge their Duty to them, the neglect of which must be reckon'd as the prime Source of all that Wick- edness wherewith the present Age does abound.

To conclude : It is my earnest Desire that you, my dear Friends, would be mov'd by the following Examples, that so there may be more such Witnesses to Religion. For it must ever be allow'd, that the most effectual way to confute *Atheism* and *Infidelity*, is to do it by the *Holiness* of our Lives ; to promote which has been the Design of all my Labours among you, and is what I aim at by this Publication. And that the God of Peace would sanctify you all, that your whole Spirit, and Soul, and Body, may be preserv'd blameless unto the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, is the earnest Prayer, and would be the Joy of,

Your faithful Servant in Christ,



Thomas Reynolds.

A N
A C C O U N T
O F T H E
L I F E
O F

Mrs. *CLISSOULD*,

Who departed this Life December
12. 1711. in the Twenty Ninth
Year of her Age.

ACCOUNT
OF THE
LIFE

Mrs. CLARKE



Who resided this Life during
the year in the Town of
Years of her Age.

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T H E
L I F E
O F
Mrs. *CLISSOULD.*

An Account of her Infancy and Childhood; the Strictness of her Education; her early Inclinations to Piety, and the sad Interruptions of them for a Time.

SHE was born in *London*; her Grandmother, who liv'd near *Stratford upon Avon*, and was a most eminent and zealous * Christian, undertook the bringing of her up from her Infancy, and

* *Converted by reading Mr. Baxter's Call to the Unconverted.*

took her home to her self before she could speak, herein having her principal Aim at the Good of her Soul.

By this means she had the Happiness of a very strict and religious Education, beyond whatever she saw among all Persons she knew. When I think of it (says she) I can't but stand and wonder at the indefatigable unwearyed Pains and Diligence of that gracious Relation which brought me up.

So soon as she could speak, she was instructed in Religion. The first thing she was taught to know was *God*; next *Herself* as a Sinner, and *Jesus Christ* as the only Saviour. The first Discourse her Grandmother would entertain her with in the Morning, was of the Goodness of God. To all her Instructions she added Prayers and Tears Night and Day.

These pious and great Endeavours were follow'd with an answerable Blessing: for by the Time she was three Years old, † she would read any where in the Bible, and say many Psalms and Chapters, besides her Catechism, without book.

She was quickly taught to take her *Bible* with her to Church, to turn down the Texts and Proofs; also to fix her Eye on the Minister, and observe what he deliver'd. It was

† This is not only left under her own Hand, but can be attested by several of her surviving Relations.

her Practice to employ her self in saying Psalms and Chapters all the way she went to Church, which was a Mile from their House; and as they return'd home, her Grandmother would examine her about what she had heard.

All this was attended with very early and hopeful Indications of a religious Temper of Mind. For (as she writes) by hearing much of God, and not being suffer'd to play with other Children, it became as it were natural to her to delight in those things she was taught. She would tell with Pleasure what she remember'd, and delighted to read good Books, and lov'd those dearly, that she thought lov'd God; and when she saw any affected under a Sermon, her Soul would be even knit unto them. She was soon taught to pray; and when she has been in the Fields, she would sometimes kneel down between the Furrows, and pray earnestly to the God of Heaven, and thought she lov'd him dearly.

When she was about five Years old, she had a Fit of Sickness, and fear'd she should die. This put her under great Terrour of Mind, and made her cry out as one in an Agony: O Grandmother I shall die, and am not prepar'd! O I shall die, and not fit to die! But it pleas'd God to recover her, and when restor'd, the 103^d Psalm was most sweet unto her. She would often repeat those Words from the third to the End of the fifth Verse with great Pleasure.

But as Historians tell us of some Rivers, particularly of the *Guadiana* in *Spain*, that after it has run a while with a pleasant Stream, does all on a sudden pass under Ground, and not rise again till at some Miles distance; so we believe it was with the Grace of God in this Person. Those hopeful Dispositions that were so conspicuous in the Beginning of her Life, sunk under the Prevalency of her natural Corruption, and were hid for a considerable Time, till the Grace of God sprang forth again like a River.

For not long after her Sickness she gave sad Proof of the Depravity of her Nature, which was such as the strictest Education was not able to repress. She grew, as she writes, a perverse, stubborn, wicked Child, and most grievously addicted to Lying. She was such an Affliction to her Grandmother, who had taken so much pains with her, that she could bear with her no longer, but committed her to the Care of a Relation, who put her to a Boarding-School near *London*, where she continu'd for the Space of five Years.

Whilst here she was sometimes under great Convictions, which put her upon reading by herself. When affected, she would call one or other of her School-fellows, and tell them her Thoughts; and once reading of the Duration of Hell and the Certainty of its Torments, they wept much for fear of going thither. Upon reading Mr. *Sclater's* Book

of

of Closet-Prayer, she betook her self to Prayer three times a Day, and engag'd another to do the like: and now (as she speaks) she thought she was become mighty good. But alas! all this wore off again by degrees. First they ceas'd at Noon, then the Morning, and last at Night. Then they grew careless and stupid, and could live without Prayer as well as any of their School-fellows. Only there was one good thing, she says, remain'd with her as the Effect of her Education, and this was that she durst not take the Lord's Name in vain herself, and reprov'd those that did.

At the end of five Years she return'd again to her Grandmother, to whose great Grief she shew'd herself a Hater of all that was serious. It was as bad as death to her to be in her Company. She would go to the Neighbour's Houses, and keep there as much as possible to avoid her, whose Discourse was for the most part of heavenly Things, being much wean'd from the World, and longing to be with Christ. She observes, that at this time her Grandmother was exercis'd with sore and tormenting Pain, scarce any Intermiſſions; and yet (says she) harden'd Wretch as I was, it seldom ever mov'd my Pity; and then adds: I can't but set it down with Amazement, how I hated Christ in his Members. I admire that ever he had Thoughts of Love towards me, and that he should deliver me at this very time from so many Dangers into

which I run my self, for Shelter (as I thought) from the religious Noise that so unwelcomely founded in my Ears. I write it with Shame. I perfectly hated my dear Grandmother, and passionately long'd for her Death, for no other Reason but her Love to Jesus, and the continual Expressions of her Love to my Soul. She goes on: I remember how compassionately she us'd to remind me of my seeming early Love. You us'd, said she, to speak of the great God with the greatest Awe, why is he now so much forgot? Her constant Practice was to rise at four a Clock all Winter, and earlier in the Summer, and for two or three Hours be sweetly engag'd in Communion with God; and often she would call to me, Awake Sleeper, and call on thy God, remember the Example of *Mary* thy Namesake, who rose early to seek her Lord.

It pleas'd God in a little time to take this excellent Person to himself, dying in full Assurance of Faith. But all this had no effect upon her naughty Grandaughter. On the contrary, she was in hopes that now she should be freed from the Confinement she had been under, and be at liberty to enjoy the Pleasures of Sin without Controul. But in her Papers she blesses God, who did not suffer her to continue in this Liberty: for through the Importunity of a Relation she had at *London*, she was prevail'd with to go live with her. And here (says she) my Misery was as great

great as ever, my Thralldom great indeed, my Prison much closer than before. So she then thought it, and wrote to her Companions that she was kept in a Prison, but in some hope she should be deliver'd in time. And indeed it pleas'd the Lord soon after this to work a Deliverance for her, but in a way quite different from what she ever imagin'd, not by taking off the Restraint she was under, but by working a marvellous Change in her Mind. For while, as she writes, she was striving with all her Might, even like one in an Agony, to get away from this Strictness also, it pleas'd the Lord to make her Thralldom her greatest Liberty. And this brings me to the

*Account she has written of her Conversion,
The Occasion, Beginning, Progress and
Completion of it.*

IT seems she had been chid on a Sabbath-Day for a Crime of which she was innocent, namely, the taking the Lord's Name in vain. This put her in a great Consternation, the Effect of which was, that it set her Thoughts a working how she should get away from her Friends, she was impatient to be gone. So that when at Church, even as the Minister was preaching, her Thoughts were wholly engag'd in contriving how she should
get

get from her Bondage. But in the midst of all these wicked Musings (that had detain'd her from minding so much as where the Text was) the || Minister in the midst of the Sermon let fall a Passage, by which it pleas'd God to awaken her Attention, to compose her Mind, and to bend it a quite contrary way to what it was before. The Passage, as she has written it down, was this.

Sinner! In every good Thought that has pass'd through thee, has Jesus Christ been knocking at the Door of thy Heart, saying by them, Open, Open. And thou refuselt by thy not minding of them.

Is it true indeed, thought she, then how many times have I shut him out! Swarms of good Thoughts have pass'd through my Heart, and was it indeed Jesus Christ knocking there? What shall I do now! Miserable Wretch! he will surely come no more to me.

At the same time she began to reflect on a Temptation, which had follow'd her Day and Night while she was with her Grandmother. She would never take the Book in her Hand, but she was strongly prompted (as tho she had heard a Voice) to utter a most blasphemous Expression against the Holy Ghost. But she writes, I very well remember, I never did consent to say so. *The Expression is too*

|| *Mr. Sclater in Grosby-Square.*

horrid

horrid to be nam'd. This was so terrible to her, that she perfectly dreaded to see the Name of the Holy Ghost, lest she should have the dreadful Word forc'd out of her Mouth: so that as soon as her Grandmother dy'd, she left off reading, and lost her Temptation. No wonder, for by this the Devil had gain'd his Point in beating her from her Duty.

But now she persuaded her self she had yielded to the Temptation. The Minister us'd that Expression in his Sermon, Mat. 12. 31. *All manner of Sin and Blasphemy shall be forgiven unto Men, but the Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto Men.* This put her into an unexpressible Consternation. Oh, says she, the Agony of Soul! no Tongue can tell, but those that have experienc'd the same. She could not forbear saying within herself, I shall be damn'd, I shall be damn'd, for I have sinn'd the unpardonable Sin indeed. She felt her self as it were in Hell, and was as sure in her Apprehensions she should go thither as if she had been actually there. The Thoughts of which fill'd her with Tears too many to be hid.

A Christian Relation perceiving her sorrowful Condition, would know the Reason thereof; which she had no sooner told, than the Person aforesaid apply'd Comfort, which gave her some Hope. This put her upon Prayer. And then (says she) the Spirit of God began to work indeed. In her first Prayer

er this Promise came to her Mind, and was apply'd to her: Ezek. 36. 26. *I will take away the stony Heart out of your Flesh, and will give you a Heart of Flesh.* Upon which she was directed to pray, Oh Lord do thou take it away. She found the Place afterwards where this Promise was, and then she saw it all spoken as it were particularly to herself, from the 24th to the 28th Verse and onwards. And then she adds :

I hope I shall never forget what a wonderful Change was wrought in me. From that day how were my Thoughts, my Judgment, my Will, my Desires alter'd! Every day was then to me as a Sabbath. As to the Terrour of Soul I was in, I don't remember the *Agony* remain'd after I had told my Case.

The next Sabbath (as she thinks it was) she heard a Sermon preach'd by Mr. Barker on this Text, Rev. 3. 20. *Behold I stand at the Door and knock; if any Man hear my Voice and open the Door, I will come in to him.* Upon this she was so surpriz'd with Joy, to think that *Jesus* whom she had so often slighted and turn'd out of her Heart, should now tell her once more he stood at the Door and knock'd, that it put her into a sensible Commotion, which might have been observ'd by those who sat in the Pew with her. And, says she, how gladly did I open, and how precious was he then to my believing Soul! How sweet was the Word! How beautiful the Face of Ministers!

sters! Every Sermon seem'd directed to me, as tho there were none to be spoken to but myself.

At that time, she says, she pray'd earnestly for the pouring forth of the Spirit upon Ministers, and in those Prayers found the Spirit pour'd out upon herself. Now those evil Things she so much delighted in before, were abhor'd by her. No Company pleas'd her but such as would talk of God, and his Dealings on their Souls; and because she could hear but little of this, she would withdraw from the World into some Place of Retirement, there to pray or read some good Book, or she would go and hear the Word preach'd.

Her Thoughts were always so intensely fix'd on things above, that the World quite lost its Relish with her. Time was then very precious with her. The Name of Worldly Recreation and Pleasure was a Burden. Meditation and Prayer were her great Delight. And how oft in these (says she) did I see God as it were Face to Face! And adds: Every thing I cast my Eye upon, rais'd admiring Thoughts of him. The Trees, Herbs and Flowers, their Shape and Colour, their Smell and Beauty made me admire the Maker. How clear a Belief had I then, that there was a God? How fully persuaded, that he was my Father? and I foolishly thought, that the Sense would never wear out.

As soon as God had thus open'd her Eyes, he turn'd her Heart to reflect on her past mispent Life: And then the Instructions of her dear Relations came fresh in her Mind, her base Carriage towards them stuck deep in her Heart; then she remember'd the earnest Prayers she had heard put up to God for her: And she earnestly beg'd of God to answer those Prayers of her dear Grandmother, which were upon the File.

It pleas'd God to shew her, that out of Christ there was no Salvation, and enabled her to catch at him, as the only Plank which could save her from drowning. He shew'd her, they were not her Prayers nor Tears could save her; and yet by his Spirit she was enabled to pray Day and Night, with strong Crying and Tears, as if by them she were to obtain Salvation.

At this Time she felt a strong and vehement Love to the People of God, and especially to the Ministers of Christ. The Tidings they brought of the Heavenly Inheritance, begat in her a lively Hope in that, and drew forth her Love to them. And those she sought to hear, whose Love, in her Apprehension, burn'd with the greatest Flame towards God.

She bless'd God, that put into her Hands the Life of Mr. John Fawcett, which mightily quicken'd and encourag'd her in her way. By his Flame she was set on Fire her self.

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The more she read of his Love, the more she lov'd. When she was near Eighteen Years old, she pray'd earnestly for that Spirit which God had pour'd out upon him, that that Year of her Life might not pass over her, without being made as zealous for God, as he was in that Year of his Life: And she blesses God, for that Spirit of Zeal for his Glory, which was given unto her. Her Soul, as she expresses it, melted within her, for the Souls of those that were out of Christ, and especially for her Relations, whose State, as to some of them, she fear'd was bad; nor was her Concern confin'd wholly to them. But the Worth of a Soul, the Loss of a Soul, and earnest Desires after the Salvation of Souls, took up very much of her Thoughts, studying daily what she should do to deliver those Souls, if possible, from Death.

Hereupon, with respect to those with whom she liv'd, and who were carnal, she earnestly besought them, Day and Night, to consider their miserable State by Nature, and to seek out for a Saviour; laying before them the Sins which she saw they liv'd in, and begging of them to consider their Danger. As for those at a distance, she sent them Letters, sometimes awakening, sometimes full of Encouragement, the one to affright, and the other to draw them, that if possible she might do some Good to some Soul, and that she might not live a useless Life: for
then,

then, as she writes, I did indeed love the Lord my God, with all my Heart, and Soul, and Strength, which Strength I daily put forth for him. And adds: I then thought I did nothing at all; but now I wish with all my Heart, 'twere with me as 'twas then. I remember how I us'd to argue the Case, and the earnest Desires which were in me, that they might take effect. After which she gives an Account of her diligent Endeavours, part of which it may not be improper here to set down in her own Expressions.

In such a Place, how earnest with such a Soul!

In such a Place, how earnest with God to change their Soul! and had great Encouragement, from my Prayers, that he would be intreated.

In such a Place, how earnest with several together! I could never come in their Company, but I improv'd the happy Opportunity, hoping to prevail, always pressing Prayer, that most delightful Duty to me: telling the Danger they were in, and the need they had of Prayer.

In such a Place, how importunate with such a one, that they would leave off such and such Sins, and engage in such and such Duties: telling how much Sweetness I had found therein. And blessed be God I saw a visible Change: Secret Duty engag'd in, the Sabbath observ'd, Love to that which was good, &c. but

but whether this be continu'd I know not, the Providence of God calling me thence. This she writes was in a Place, where all that was serious was despis'd.

Another time, being full of Concern for the Soul of a Relation of Mr. *John Janaway's*, being mov'd with Pity for one that was so nearly ally'd to him, she took his printed Life along with her, and told that Person what Benefit she had receiv'd from it, and desir'd she would use the Means that he had directed, by which she might taste and feel something of what he found so sweet. I bless God, says she, some Good was done; but whether it was abiding, I cannot tell. Some Years after, she met that Person again, and receiv'd Thanks for what she had said: after which she subjoins.

There's one Place more I'll mention, the Thoughts of which fill me with greater Joy than the Increase of the World in all its Grandeur would have done. Blessed be God, I can say, in such a Place I was made the happy Instrument of turning a vile Sinner from the Error of his Ways: God open'd my Mouth, and I spake, I intreated and prevail'd. I saw a Change, a mighty Change, and believe all the Powers of Earth and Hell shall never be able to pluck that Soul out of the Hand of Christ. Thus you have had an Account of her Conversion, with some notable Proofs and Evidences of it. The next Head contains

*An Account of some of her Temptations,
and the Victories she obtain'd over them.*

AFTER the Lord had call'd her Home, Satan pursu'd and follow'd her with horrible and grievous Temptations.

She was sadly harass'd with wicked and filthy Suggestions, that made her weary of her Life. Every thing almost she beheld was turn'd into a Temptation; and even at those Times especially, would she be infected with them, when she was engag'd in meditating on a dying Jesus: but under this she cry'd to God for Help, as for her Life, and not in vain; for it pleas'd the Lord to break in upon her Soul with such a Revelation of his glorious Majesty, and to give her such Views of himself, as made both the Temptation and the Devil to vanish at once. But when those Views were off, the evil Imaginations would return again; but at last it pleas'd God wholly to deliver her. This, she says, was a sore Temptation.

After this she was soon assaulted with another, which was to deny the Truth of the Holy Scriptures. This beset her as she was reading of them; but it pleas'd God to remove this from her, by helping her to understand the true Sense of his Word: upon which her Difficulties were soon remov'd, and her Faith

Faith in the Scriptures wax'd stronger than ever it had done before, and she was never more set upon by that Temptation.

However, not long after this, she had new Perplexities about the Justice of God's Decrees (as she expresses it) by reason that some only were sav'd, and others left to perish. How can this, thought she, be consistent with so much Love as I daily read of? But in answer to them, that Passage presented it self with other Thoughts: *Secret Things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are reveal'd belong unto us, and to our Children*, Deut. 29. 29. Therefore, leaving that which was so deep a Mystery unto God, she turn'd her Thoughts to what was more plain and obvious: and this was, that how much soever the Dereliction of those that perish was a Secret, she found it did unspeakably enhance the Mercy of those that were made the Heirs of Salvation. She saw the transcendent Love which this must enkindle in the Souls of such as were sav'd, and particularly from such Considerations as these: Look yonder how many Multitudes are lost! Look yonder what miserable Objects they are! and lo! here I am sav'd, I, that was as miserable by Nature as they, as ready to shake off Divine Impressions as they, as backward to Duty as they. Why me then? Why me Lord? What's the Reason? Behold thus it is, and yet *just and right is he*. Then she adds:

The burning Love which now a Soul, sav'd from Hell, must feel! beyond what 'tis likely it would have done, had all been promiscuously sav'd. The glorious Rejoicing in Jesus! The sweet Notes which are sung to him that hath lov'd us, and wash'd us from our Sins in his own Blood! The being deliver'd from what others feel, is what will draw forth the Heavenly Work of Praise. Upon which she concludes: Lord help me from ever quarrelling with thy Ways of Providence. *O the Depth of the Riches both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out!* Rom. 11. 33.

She was likewise often tempted to disbelieve the Being of a God, or at least to lessen his Perfections; because (as she speaks) she could not fathom nor find out the Beginning of his Days: but she bless'd God for the Mercy she had in that, under such a Difficulty, she could read and search the Scriptures, where she found written these words: *Behold God is great, and we know him not; neither can the Number of his Years be search'd out,* Job 36. 26. No, they cannot; wiser than thou by far, O my Soul, says she, have cry'd out, *Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to Perfection? It is as high as Heaven, what canst thou do? Deeper than Hell, what canst thou know? The Measure thereof is longer than the Earth, and broader than the Sea,* Job

11. 7, 8, 9. How? Which way? Where wilt thou go to satisfy thy inquiring Mind? or, where can thy Thoughts ramble by reason of Darkneſs? For *touching the Almighty we cannot find him out*, ſays *Elihu*, Job 37. 23. And the Great God himſelf ſays, *Where waſt thou when I did ſo and ſo? Waſt thou then born? or, haſt thou done ſo ſince thy Day?* Job 38. 4. No Lord, we are of yeſterday, and know nothing.

After this Account of her Temptations, ſhe ſays, it pleas'd God to convince her of the Neceſſity of giving up her ſelf more explicity to him in Covenant, which ſhe did by the Advice of a Reverend Miniſter, and made uſe of thoſe words ſhe found in Mr. *Allen's Book*. Before this, ſhe had many Doubts and Fears, leſt after all ſhe ſhould fall away; but now ſhe thought, there was a ſtrong Band of Union between her and Jeſus Chriſt: and upon this, ſhe began to have a more ſettled Hope of Salvation than ever ſhe had before. This ſhe did when ſhe was about Nineteen Years of Age.

A little time after which, the whole Nation was put into a Conſternation, upon a ſad Providence that fell out. But ſhe bleſſed God, that her Heart was fix'd truſting in him: And among the Multitude of Thoughts that were within her, this was matter of Joy, that ſhe did not ſtay till a Time of Diſtreſs, before ſhe engag'd in ſolemn Cove-

nanting with God, wherein she resolv'd, by the Assistance of his Grace, to follow him through all Difficulties to her Life's End; and at this time she gave up her self intirely to him, to be dispos'd of as he saw fit. After what has been said of her Temptations, it may not be improper, to add to these,

An Account of some of her Experiences.

SPEAKING of these, she thus expresses her self: I shall reflect on some Places, where I have seen such Sight, and believ'd such Things, as the very Remembrance thereof inflames my Heart with Love to that God who was the Author of them. As to the Places, they shall, many of them, know me no more; but, by Faith, I can sit and walk again in them, and review the same things over again, for they were not things of a common Belief. And then she proceeds:

In such a Place, I saw my self in a most miserable Condition, by reason of Sin; and yet most happy through *Jesuu*. There did I loath and abhor my self, reflecting on my base Carriages towards him; and even there had I this blessed Promise apply'd to my Soul: Isa. 4. 4. *Fear not, for thou shalt not be asham'd; neither be thou confounded, for thou shalt not be put to Shame: for thou shalt forget*

get the Shame of thy Youth; and shalt not remember the Reproach of thy Widowhood any more.

In such a Place, I did commit my Soul, with a clear View of Faith, into the Hands of Christ, to be kept against *that Day*; and did believe, that he would keep it till then.

In such a Place (which was a Garden) reflecting on the Sufferings of Christ in a Garden, considering his Agony, it put me even in an Agony too: and whilst by Faith I believ'd, and by Love I aspir'd; whilst, by the Help of the Spirit, I wrestled; looking stedfastly up, I saw as it were the Heavens open'd, * and that same *Jesus* strengthening, confirming and ravishing my Soul with his Love. Then I did believe indeed, and love indeed.

In that same Place, at another time :

*O Halcyon Days! thrice happy State,
Each Place was Bethel, Heaven's Gate.*

I saw full, perfect, compleat Happiness to be only in Heaven, and there to be most certain. The Pleasure I took in the Variety of sweet Smells, rais'd my Soul to those Rivers of Pleasure above; these I saw to be but Drops

* *This was to be sure, an Expression only of the lively Affings of her Faith.*

from the Ocean, the Thoughts of which made me passionately long for clearer Revelations.

In such a Place, being made sensible of my originally corrupted Nature, I passionately long'd for a Deliverance: and yet willing to have staid even to the Years of *Methuselah*, if but in that time, I might be enabled to do something signal for my God, and for my *Jesus*.

In such a Place, I had this blessed Promise set home with such Power, that the effect of its Sweetness lasted for many Years, with so feeling an Impression, that no outward Trouble (tho in that time I met with many) could at all discourage or prevent my sensible Trust and Confidence. It was, *Gen. 17. 7. to be a God unto thee*. This she had under a Sermon, and gives an Account of some of the Heads of it, and concludes: But that which I have experienc'd in Sermons, I design as my last, and therefore will mention no more in this Place. But this she did not live to accomplish: and it was one of her greatest Troubles, when she lay upon her Death-Bed, that she had not done it, having only just made a Beginning, which, because it is but little, I shall add it here. Her Words are these:

The first Sermon I heard from Mr. ——— was upon these Words, *Rom. 8. 28. We know that all things work together for good, to them that love God*. Not some things (said he)

nor

nor many things, or a few things, but ALL. That Word *All* was so sweet—— and many Sermons I heard from him, which were of great Support to me, on * *Rom. 7. 24, 25.* By those Sermons, I saw Sin so loathsome a thing; and yet found my self so greatly tainted with it, that I knew not what to do to get away from this Body of Sin, which stuck faster to me than my Skin. A Deliverance from Misery would not serve my turn: no; Sin was the greatest Bondage I fear'd; and therefore I long'd for Death, as being the only means by which I could really be deliver'd from Sin. Oh the sweet Gleams of the Spirit at that time dispens'd! and how did it cause me to pour out my Soul in Prayer, for him that was the Mouth of God unto me! O the Strength of Affection, the Vehemency of Expostulation, the earnest Wrestlings with God for more of his Spirit to be pour'd out on this Mr. ——! From these extraordinary Experiences of the Divine Grace and Favour, I shall now proceed to set down what she writes concerning

* *These were not preach'd by him who writes this Life, but by another. An Account of what she experienc'd under his Ministry, to whom she belong'd, God has wisely prevented.*

Her

Her Spiritual Declensions and Defections.

YOU have seen her in the Mount, now behold her walking in the Valley. It is not always Day or Sun-shine with Believers; they have their dark, as well as lucid Intervals; they have their Winter, as well as Summer Seasons. How it was with her in these respects, and what was the Frame of her Spirit at such a time, will appear from the following Relation she gives of her self: This is in a short Diary, wherein for some time she made a daily Observation upon the Frame of her Spirit. This, she says, she had been taught to do immediately upon her Conversion; tho of late, she had been so far left to her self, that she could not tell how to use a Pen. And adds: Lord assist me now to begin again. After which she writes in the following Words:

May 1. 1708. I have had this Day, through Mercy, some Taste, some Sight, some Sense, blessed be God for this! I have some Affection moving, when beholding a dying, bleeding *Jesus* at his Table. What! but some Sight, may a lively Christian say? Can any be dead and unaffected in such a Place as that?
Ans. I once thought so my self; but sad
 Expe-

Experience shews, the most affectionate
Sights and Sounds, without the Spirit
of God, will avail nothing; for which
I have been enabled most earnestly to
wrestle, using the Promise of a faithful
God, as an Argument: *If ye being evil,*
know how to give good Gifts unto your
Children; how much more shall your Hea-
venly Father give the Holy Spirit to them
that ask him? Luke 11. 13.

2. I have nothing to say, but dead; no
Views, no Faith, no Life, no Warmth.
3. All one, dead still.

Oh might my dead Affections once be green,
And hopeful springing Buds on them be seen!

4. Oh dead, I am asham'd to write, 'tis
the same now. Oh Lord, wilt thou
look on one so hateful? pardon one so
bad?
5. Death may be writ on all my Prayers
and Thoughts, on all my Actions. No
Courage to speak for God. I have no
Delight my self in his Service; how can
I speak to others?
6. Oh that this Winter was over! Oh that
these Clouds were scatter'd! Lord hum-
ble me, I can do nothing of my self. I
have no Memory, no Gifts, no Parts,
no Grace in Exercise, my Leaf is wi-
ther'd.

7. Blessed be God! some feeling Desires,
 some Delight and Love, some Faith.
 Oh what does Unbelief rob me of! 'Tis
 good to be here.

8. Oh blessed Sabbath! and yet as dead as
 possible. I hear much, and yet feel but
 little. O might I work the Works of
 him that sent me while it is Day!

9. All dead, what can I say? What can I
 write? How can I chuse but blush for
 Shame?

10. 'Tis all one still, *dead* is the Word, as
 tho I could speak nothing else. I hope
 however, it is, as I have lately seen, like
 a Tree of Bays which is us'd to be green
 all the Year; but the Frost has so far
 kill'd it, that at first view it seems all
 dead: but look narrowly, and there are
 some few green Buds, which shew 'tis
 alive. Lord, grant it may not recover
 its Verdure before me! before thy Spirit
 has been at work, as in Times past!

11. Blessed be God, I now have some be-
 lieving Views of unseen Realities. I can
 be fully satisfy'd of the Being of a God,
 and the Relation he stands in to me.

12. 'Tis all one as it us'd to be, dead again.
 The Grace of one Day is not sufficient
 for another. Lord, for the continu'd In-
 fluences of thy Spirit, without which I
 feel I can do nothing.

13. Oh how dead and cold am I! Oh where's that Spirit that us'd to breathe so sweetly upon my Soul! Where are those Apprehensions of Divine Things as us'd to be?
14. And must I still make this dismal Sound, *dead, dead?* I can do nothing to answer the End for which I was made, nor give any Proof of my Love to God by my Actions.
15. I am now come to the End of another Sabbath. Once the Word was sweeter to me than any thing. Once nothing could move me, my Affections were so strong, but now little Impression is made. Oh Lord, help me to keep my self from mine Iniquity! Love of Sleep, and a cowardly Spirit in speaking for God, are my Constitution-Sins. Lord for Strength to overcome! Oh help me to overcome: O help!
16. Some Victory got this day, but yet very cold, very little Sense, very little done.
17. Oh why dost thou hide thy self! without thy Spirit the most dreadful Apprehensions won't rouse me to my Duty.
18. My wither'd Soul! my wither'd Soul!

*I fear lest that dead Tree
Will get the Start of Me.*

There

There were some small Buds under a wither'd Face of Leaves, which shew it was alive. I hope tho I seem all wither'd and dead, there are some small Buds do shew there is some Life which will spring forth in time.

*Lord! let not that Tree
Get the Start of Me.*

19. Oh! little of a Revival. All seems dead still, but Lord awake me.

20. I am as it were quite dead, I cannot breathe in Prayer, I can't see by Faith, I can't feel in my Affection, my Senses are lost.

21. Oh the World! How does it swallow up my precious time? How does it rob my Soul? but yet this World do I hate, and long for Communion with (I hope I may say) my God.

22. I am very much out of Frame this blessed Sabbath-Day. Oh that the Word may bring forth Fruit, tho 'tis not receiv'd with those sweet Illuminations of thy Grace as formerly.

After this she writes, she had had some believing Views of God, and some Sense of the Worth of invisible Realitys, occasion'd by the Sickness of a Servant. And again she blesses God she had had some sweet Tastes of his

his Love, and some Belief that she was his and he was hers. And adds, I have been this Day at his Table, and have had my Desires enlarg'd after my Jesus. *Oh fulfil the Desires of them that fear thee!* Since I wrote here last I have had great Illness, been in grievous Pain : but Oh in how much more was my Jesus! and that for me! Oh that I could but live by Faith, and that all my Affections were fix'd on their right Objects! How glad should I be, could I find myself always inclin'd to duty! Might but my Soul go after certain things! Those will indeed last for ever.

But she soon breaks out again in this sorrowful Complaint :

—O sad! *The Tree*
Has got the Start of Me.

What I fear'd is come upon me. I live in all appearance a useless Life. The Tree I formerly mention'd is as green and beautiful as possible, and I, on the contrary, as dead and lifeless. And will this be always the Note? No, I have hope from the many Promises which have been particularly set home upon my Heart. And then she makes the following Recital :

God has said, *I will take away thy stony Heart,*
and I will give thee a Heart of Flesh, Ezek.
 36. 26.

God

God has said, *He will not break the bruised Reed, nor quench the smoking Flax, till he send forth Judgment into Victory*, Mat. 12. 20.

God hath said, *He will bring forth my Righteousness as the Light, and my Judgment as the Noon-day*, Ps. 37. 6.

God hath said, *He will be to me as the Dew, and I shall revive as the Corn*, Hosea 14. 5, 7.

Again he has said, *I will pour my Spirit upon thy Seed, and my Blessing upon thy Offspring*, Isa. 44. 3.

He hath said, *Fear not, for thou hast found Favour with God*, Luke 1. 30.

He hath said, *The Eternal God is thy Refuge, and underneath are the Everlasting Arms*, Deut. 33. 27. These Promises were immediately apply'd by the Spirit of God to her Soul. These, says she, are refreshing to me, and on these his Words do I hope. Many more were apply'd to her under the Ministry of the Word; some of which she design'd to have taken notice of, had she liv'd. After the recital of these Promises, she adds: Oh that I could spend, and be spent for this God! Oh that I could lose my Life in glorifying of him! Oh that I did but know him more! then I should love him better, and follow him closer. I come now to

The

The last Account she has written of herself.

JULY 1710. I was took with a Fever, by which I was brought to the Brink of the Grave. Methought the World and I was parting, that I was stepping that last Step. Methought my Sun was setting in a Cloud. The Light of God's Countenance was withdrawn, but yet I had a good hope through Grace. I fear'd not Death, but yet was loth to die, not for Love of the World, but by reason I had done no more for God in the World. I bless God I could trust him in the dark; and the Soul which I had committed to him when I had Light, I did believe he would keep safe for me. I had so often trusted in him, and he was such a try'd Friend to me, that I could quietly commit my departing Soul into his Hand. But when I consider'd how little I had done for a God, whom I had found in many thousand Instances so kind, I could hardly bear the Thoughts of dying, but with *Hezekiah*, I turn'd my Face to the Lord and wept sore, 2 Kings 20. 2, 3. I pleaded the Case with him: *Can the Dead*, said I, *shew forth thy Praise?* Oh cut me not off in the midst of my Tears! Wilt thou shew Wonders in the Grave! Psal. 88. 11, 12. 'Tis the Living, the Living shall praise thee, Isa. 38. 19.

A kind God has heard Prayer, and has deliver'd ; but what am I spar'd for ? Before I am recover'd, Paleness appears in many Faces. Am I just sav'd from an easy peaceable Death, to die a violent one, or to suffer I know not what ? I can't tell what the Event of things will be. My Sins deserve great Sufferings. Their Punishment would be severe : But I don't look for what they merit, then it would be Hell ; No, no, 'tis through a Jesus, God looks upon me. *Oh that I knew where I might find him, then would I come even to his Seat !* Job 23. 3. Then would I fear none of these things. Lord, put under thine Everlasting Arm to support, and then bring upon me what thou wilt. Make me victorious even to the Death, and then let it be Death itself, if in that I might glorify thee. Prevent me ever being unwilling to part with any thing thou hast given me. Suffer me not to set my Heart upon any of these things. When I consider, five Years ago, I had not so many of the good things of this Life to call my own as now I have, and that I now have them, is, because God hath graciously given them me. Blessed be God I have had them so long. Let thy Time, O Lord, be my time for their Stay. To thee I freely resign my self, my Spouse, my worldly Substance ; do with me and mine what thou pleasest. Some Children in this time thou hast given me, thou hast taken them again, blessed be thy

thy Name! I as firmly believe, as if I saw the Heavens open'd, that my Children are both of them with Jesus. *First*, From the Promise made to me before they were born. *Secondly*, From the many Prayers the Spirit of God excited in me for them in the Womb. *Thirdly*, From the frequent devoting of them to the Lord when I had them. I remember with what Pleasure I stretch'd them out in my Arms before the Lord: How I lifted them up towards Heaven, where they are gone before, freely submitting to the Will of him that took them to himself, and yet praying earnestly, if it would please God, to spare Life. O Lord, said I, if it may please thee, let this Child live in thy Sight! Those Words were immediately suggested: *Precious in the Sight of the Lord is the Death of his Saints*, Psal. 116. 15.

And thus I have faithfully transcrib'd the Account she has left written under her own Hand. And they that have read this, will easily believe what shall be further said of her in

Some brief Remarks on the Course of her Life, the Graces that shone in her, and her Exemplary Deportment at Death.

SHE made Religion her main Business, her Heart and Soul were taken up in the Concerns of it. She was very constant in the discharge of Secret Dutys, abundant in Prayer and Meditation. From the day of her Conversion (as she gives the Account herself) she never omitted her daily Duty: No Business would hinder her from it. When all others have been in Bed, she would sit up very late in the Night to converse with God in secret.

She was a strict Observer of the Lord's Day, and took great care that all about her kept it.

She was diligent in her Attendance at the Lord's Table, as often as she had opportunity, and her Health would permit, nay sometimes when her weak Circumstances would seem to forbid it.

There were few her Fellows in the discharge of relative Dutys. She had a true Affection for her Relations, and express'd it above all in a wonderful Concern for their Souls.

As for her Servants and others of her Acquaintance and Friends, it was surprizing

ing to hear of the Pains she has taken in instructing, reprovng and praying for them.

She had great Compassion on the Ignorant. She was much in instructing them Night and Day, and would herself teach them to read. And besides the Pains she thus bestow'd upon them, she would give them Mony to quicken and encourage them in Learning. By this means some have own'd, the first Impressions they receiv'd of Seriousness to have been from her. She spake it as matter of Comfort, that she knew there were those in Heaven who were glorifying God on her account.

She was faithful and prudent in administering her Reproofs. As to those to whom she could not so well apply herself by Speech, she would write to them, and endeavour'd to do it with such a moving Strain, and in such a Christian manner, as not justly to offend, if it did not reclaim. Others she has faithfully reprov'd by speaking to them, especially such as would take the Lord's Name in vain, the Sound of which in a trifling manner was us'd (as she says her self) to pierce her Soul as tho it was a Sword; nor could she bear to hear it without reprovng, for which she has been threaten'd with Canes lifted up, and bitter Rage. This was when she was very young; but afterwards when leud People have stood about her Shop and blasphem'd God, if she thought she could not prevail by speaking to them, she has given

them Mony to forbear their profane Cursing and Swearing, it was such a Burden to her to hear it.

She us'd to be much in Prayer for the Souls of those she had a respect for; and those she thought in danger, she would follow with the most earnest Intreaties to consider their sad Case, and with Tears would beseech them to take care of their precious Souls. I shall here mention an Instance which she has left in Writing, and which I have omitted in the foregoing Account.

It was occasion'd by the Sickness of one of her Servants, concerning whom she writes these Words: Methought I saw her Soul standing at the Door of Eternity and of Hell. At the same time methought I saw the Devils watching to catch it. All hope of Life was gone, and no hope of Life Eternal could be perceiv'd. I bless God for the Affection it wrought in me: and then she confesses, I have no Sense of the Worth of a Soul; the Souls of my Servants, as well as my own, may die in my House without Concern, if I have not that Concern given me of God, and I bless his Name for what I have. It was some Comfort to me, that I had not put off speaking to, and intreating the poor Creature before this dismal hour. I had before told her that Life was but a Thread, which God could in a moment snap in two. I had directed her to the most important Dutys, as Prayer,
Hearing

Hearing and Reading, &c. I had told her the Danger of a natural State, and what a State that was. I had intreated her and the rest to go to God for a Deliverance, but no Change wrought as I saw; which made it strike with deep Impression, to think a Soul should go out of my House to Hell. This made me in the most affectionate manner beseech with Tears, and yet afraid to speak lest Life should be overthrown thro Grief; for through the Fear of Death (being told the dismal Account she'd have to give) Tears flow'd on both sides amain, and great Hopes I had (and Promises she made) if God should spare Life, that a Change would be wrought; but alas! she recover'd, and has forgot her sick-bed Repentance.

To all that has been said I shall add a few Things concerning some other Excellencies that were very conspicuous in her, and that are worthy the Christian Reader's Imitation.

She had great Knowledg in the things of God; especially in the experimental Part of Religion, and the Secrets of God's Covenant. To this the Education and Example she had from her holy Grandmother, and other Christian Relatives, were a great help. Besides that, after it pleas'd God thorowly to convert her, she was indefatigable in her Endeavours to know Him, whom to know is Life Eternal. For this end she spent many whole Nights in Reading, Prayer and Meditation.

An insatiable Thirst after the saving Knowledge of God carry'd her beyond her bodily Strength : so earnest was she upon the saving of her Soul, that it is thought she too much forgot the Respect she had to her Body, and that her often Watching, and great Pains might contribute somewhat to the contracting those Distempers that shorten'd her Days; which puts me in mind of a Passage quoted by the Reverend * Mr. Shower from Dr. Gilpin's excellent Book of *Temptation*. It may be reckon'd, says he, as one of Satan's Temptations to the most diligent and useful Preachers (and so it may be said of some extraordinary Christians) by overdoing to lay a Snare for their Lives, lavishing their Strength in a Prodigality of Pains for the good of Souls, which like a Thief in a Candle immediately wastes them; whereas a better husbanded Strength might be more advantageous, by continuing the Light longer : And yet their Ends are so sincere, their Work so pleasant, and their Hearts so inflam'd with Zeal, that they seldom observe, as they might, that Satan is glad of the Opportunity, to destroy them with their own Weapon.

After her Knowledge I may mention her Faith. This was indeed above what is or-

* Shower's *Funeral-Sermon on Mr. Nath. Oldfield*.
dinary,

dinary, as appears from several Instances in the foregoing Account. She made it her particular Exercise to honour God by believing, and by placing an intire Trust and Confidence in his Promises. Herein she imitated the Father of the Faithful, in being fully persuaded that what he had promis'd, he was able also to perform. How many Promises did she apply to her own Soul, and did most firmly believe they should be made good unto her. When she was actually dying, she could not but declare it for the Glory of God with a sort of Admiration, how strongly she had sometimes been enabled to believe. She was truly a diligent Follower of them, who through Faith and Patience have inherited the Promises.

She was very exemplary in her Charity. Herein she had a Privilege and an Opportunity allow'd above many of her Sex in the like Circumstances, which I cannot prescribe for a general Rule, nor recommend it *always* for an Example.

I confess, that in all the Time of my Acquaintance with her, I apply'd to her but once for Charity, which was in presence of her Husband: but I found the thing done already before I could desire it, and indeed beyond my Expectation. Another time having publicly mention'd the Case of a very necessitous Minister in the Country; she sent me a Sum to convey to him, which accordingly

ingly was done: and in her Sickness she desir'd to be truly inform'd about the Circumstances of another Person, for whom she offer'd to do very considerably if there had been need, but there was none. These are all the Instances I can relate upon my own Knowledge. But her nearest Friends have given me such Accounts of her readiness to do good, and of her Prudence in the secret Management of it, that I must mention this as having no small share in her excellent Character.

She was also very eminent for her Love to good People, especially to godly Ministers, for whom she was always praying. When she found herself dying, she could not forbear declaring to one of those that attended her in her Sickness, how often she had pray'd for him, how she had lain prostrate before God, and with what Ardour and Vehemency of Soul she had pleaded and wrestled with the Lord to pour out his Spirit upon him, and to make his Labours successful: and then speaking to him, she express'd her earnest Desires in most pertinent Petitions for him. She spoke much to the same purpose, as I am inform'd, to another. The Lord gave a gracious Answer to her Prayers.

I need not after all this tell you of her Publick Spiritedness, and the burning Zeal she had for the Honour of God, and the Interest of Souls. The whole Account we have giv-

en

en of her Life is but one continu'd Instance of it. She says in her Writings, and she us'd the same Expression to me when the cold Sweats of Death were upon her, that she had wish'd her Flesh was Brass, and her Sinews Iron, and that thus she might have worn herself out in the Service of God.

There is but one thing more I shall mention, and this was her great Modesty and Humility, with which as with a Veil she cover'd her other Excellencies. She thought worse of herself than any other Christian she knew, and was far from being noisy or ostentatious: she disclos'd but little of her Heart, except it were to those from whom she hop'd to find some Spiritual Assistance and Benefit, or to whom she might do some good. And when she deliver'd herself, it was with such an Air of Sincerity and real Seriousness, with that modest Softness and unaffected Humility as was truly entertaining and edifying. In her Writings she study'd the greatest Secrecy, and carefully conceal'd her Papers from the sight even of her nearest Relatives. She labour'd to be as useful as possible, to do what good she could, and yet to be seen as little as might be.

I shall make an end after I have told you, that as thus she led an Exemplary Life, so she was as Exemplary in her Death. She was exercis'd for several Weeks with most exquisite Pains, which were a great Trial to her
Patience:

Patience : yet in all she entirely resign'd her self to the Will of God, she hop'd that God would spare her to do something farther for him in this World ; but when she found it was his Pleasure to call her home, she quietly submitted, being carry'd above the Fear of Death as well as the Love of Life. She told a Friend that visited her, that howsoever it should please God to deal with her in this Sickness, she was sure her Soul was safe. The Pains of Death did not abate her Zeal for God ; even then how great was her Concern for the Good of Souls ! How full was she of Exhortations to her Relations, Friends and Servants, as they came about her ! How pertinent was she in her Addresses to particular Persons, quickning some, admonishing others, recommending Religion to All, sending Messengers to those of her Servants that were absent, and making those that were present promise they would faithfully deliver them. Afterwards when they were all together (which was the Night before she dy'd) how movingly did she speak to them ! and directed her Exhortations to those especially that she thought needed them most. Oh what Floods of Tears did she often draw from those that were in the Room, and that stood round her Bed ! She spoke with great Affection and Judgment as long as her Strength would permit. She held fast her Confidence to the End. In the Agony of Death she gave me
these

these Words, as what she thought most adapted to her Case, to be the Subject of her Funeral Discourse: *And Blessed is she that believ'd, for there shall be a Performance of those Things which were told her from the Lord.* And when (because her Strength failing her, she desir'd her nearest Relative to rehearse them) upon his mentioning that part of them, *Blessed is she that believ'd,* she rais'd herself up, as tho recovering a new Vigour from them, and repeated them herself, saying, *Blessed is She, she, she that believ'd.* She express'd an intire Trust in God, saying, that she knew her Life was hid with Christ in God; and was perswaded that he would keep what she had committed to him. She own'd she had not those extraordinary Transports which some have felt, but found strong Supports. After this her Spirits fainting she said, What shall I do? and presently again, What shall I do? upon which she immediately rous'd her self up, and opening her Eyes said to those of us that were about her, Do not think that I complain thus because I am affrighted at Death. She languish'd till the next day, when visiting her again, her Strength and Speech being just gone, I only said that I hop'd she felt an inward Peace, and that she still confided in God; to which she gather'd up all the Strength she had, and cry'd, Yes. I took my leave of her, and in a few hours after, she ascended, leaving the Body till the

Resur-

Resurrection of the Just. She dy'd *December*
12th, in the *Twenty Ninth Year* of her Life,
Anno 1711.

*Blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord —
 that they may rest from their Labours, and
 their Works do follow them.*

AN
APPENDIX,

Containing Some of Her
Spiritual Breathings

AND
MEDITATIONS.

MEDITATION I.

Her Sense of Sin.

I Find Sin to be the heaviest Burden in the World. All Afflictions seem light to those which I find Sin to be the immediate Cause of. If my Conscience don't accuse me for bringing the Affliction upon

upon my self by such or such a Sin, it then sits easie; for I found my self more troubled for the Cause of my Affliction, than the Affliction it self.

MED. II.

Her Desire of Deliverance from Sin.

THERE's no Sin which I earnestly desire to have pardon'd, but with as much Earnestness I desire to have purg'd and utterly abolish'd: and could there be such a thing as Salvation in Sin, it would be to me an uneasy, bitter and abhor'd thing. I should rather be a Stock or Stone, the most senseless of Beings, than have leave to live in Sin; for I count it one of the most afflicting things in the World, to be left to Sin, and to have former Sins punish'd by being permitted to go on in Sin.

MED. III.

Her Thirst after Holiness.

TH E R E is nothing I breathe after so much as Holiness; nor does any thing so much delight my Soul, as the Thought that one day I shall be Holy and without Blame before God in Love. I covet earnestly,

earnestly, but they are the best Gifts, such as Faith, Love and Repentance; Grace to please God, Grace that I may get ripe for Heaven, Grace to keep a Conscience void of Offence towards God and Man; Grace to be all of apiece, always serious, not by Fits and Starts, not only in my Retirements, not only in the House of God, but in my Conversation; and that, not only with my Tongue but my Heart. I long for an habitual and awful Sense of God's All-seeing Eye to govern my Hands, Eyes, Tongue and Feet; my Heart, all the Members of my Body and Motions of my Soul, as one that is sensible God sees, and what a God he is. I long to be deliver'd from the Vanity of my Mind, to have my Thoughts working after God, fill'd with serious Meditations. Oh how shall I do to die, how shall I do to live to the Glory of that God whose I am?

MED. IV.

Her Sense of the Virtue of Christ's Blood:

I Do really think my self one of the worst of Sinners in the World. And yet as bad as I know my self to be, and God knows me to be, I am sure there is Virtue enough in the Blood of Christ to take all the Stains out of my Soul.

MED. V.

Her Justifying of God.

THE Consideration of my own Vileness makes me justify God in his most afflictive Dispensations towards me; and under the most pressing Weights I can't chuse but bless him with Admiration that they are no heavier.

MED. VI.

Her Thankfulness for Afflictions.

I Do really bless God for my Afflictions as heartily as for other Mercies, for I reckon them among the Number. The Cordials I have to comfort me when afflicted, are sweeter than the Affliction it self is bitter. I find the being brought into rough and tempestuous ways, is a great means to raise my Soul in the high Praises of God, when set at liberty, and that with more Sense and Affection than if I had not been so afflicted and so deliver'd.

MED.

MED. VII.

Her Thoughts of the World.

FOR my part, as little or as much as I have seen of the World, I can look on it with no Satisfaction or Pleasure. To me it seems to be in a continual hurry, a very noisy Place, fill'd with high and blustering Winds, Storms and Tempests, pricking Briars and Thorns. Young People that are just setting forth in it, usually form vast Expectations from it. But I am young as well as they, and I see nothing here but what bids me long for a more serene and calm Region. There's nothing I have lov'd, but I have found a Sting in it; there's nothing I do love, but it draws forth many a Tear; there's nothing I desire, but I expect with it some Cross or other, to tell me 'tis but a Creature, a fair Flower but fading; there's nothing I enjoy which is delightful and pleasant that I dare fix too fast upon, for in a moment something may intervene that may cut it off, or separate me from it so, as not to enjoy the Sweetness of it. Its Usefulness may be taken away, or I may be depriv'd of it, or be render'd incapable of enjoying it.

MED. VIII.

Her Improvement of Pain.

BY Pains I have learned how great a Deliverance from them is; by feeling the Sharpness of them, I hope I can more affectionately think of the Love of Christ. Oh how grievous is it to be in violent Pain! Oh how great was his Love to be a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Grief! He drank of the Brook in the way, nay all the way thro the World. And is Pain most painful in the Night? Yet when others were sleeping he was in an Agony, the inward Workings of his Soul being so great, that he sweat as it were great Drops of Blood. With his Stripes we are heal'd: He was oppress'd, and he was afflicted, and that for me. His tender Constitution without doubt made him feel his Pain with more exquisite Sense than I could do the raging of mine. This help'd to assuage my own. Oh how should we abound in Thanksgiving to God for every day's Deliverance from a Temporary Pain, how much more for Deliverance from Eternal?

MED.

MED. IX.

Her Sense of her own Unworthiness.

I Am sensible I am unworthy of the least Mercy I enjoy, that I am not worthy of the Bread I eat or Clothes I wear: That all the Understanding, Knowledg, Inclination to Good, Desires after Grace and Glory that are in me, are not from my self, but are all the Gift of God. I am sensible I can't believe, nor repent, nor love of my self: if I am enabled to do it one time, I have no power to do it again, nor dare I say 'tis an easie thing to do either; for if I do once, I find I need the same Power to assist the second time, and the third, and so on as at the first. There's no room for boasting under the Law of Faith. Therefore I declare I renounce all Self-Righteousness. I do not expect Salvation for any thing I do. If I am accepted at last, it must be thro the Righteousness of another: And therefore, I throw my self at the Foot of him that died, that he might bring us to God. I have Filth with my most shining Dutys; Oh wash the Stains out with thy Blood! I am lame, blind, ragged, naked, helpless, defil'd; Oh for the Fountain open!

MED. X.

*Her Thoughts upon the dangerous Sickneſs
of a dear Relative.*

AS a ſtrong Fort to flee unto ; as a Ground of ſweet Conſolation in the moſt ſinking Time ; as a ſtrong Defence that will ſhelter from the moſt violent Storms and Tempeſts, are the following Conſiderations to my Soul : When my Mind runs here, I think I can bear any thing ; the Loſs of all ; the Loſs of Health, of Relations on whom I depend, and whom I love ; all that is dear to me, without repining or murmuring. As *firſt*, that God orders, diſpoſes and manages all things by the Counſel of his own Will ; when I think of the Extenſiveness of his Providence, that it reaches to the minuteſt thing : Then tho a uſeful Friend or dear Relation be ſnatch'd away by Death, I recall my ſelf, and check my rambling Thoughts with theſe Conſiderations : Is not God, from Everlaſting to Everlaſting, God ? And has he not promis'd to be a God to me ? a God in all his Attributes ? a God in all his Perſons ? a God in all his Creatures and Providences ? And ſhall I dare to ſay, what ſhall I do ? Was not he the infinite Cauſe of all that I met with in the Creature, and were
not

not they the finite Effect of his infinite Love and Kindness? I have daily experienc'd that the Instrument was and is what God makes it to be, and this God has the Hearts of all Men in his Hand. And the Earth is the Lord's, and the Fullness thereof. If this Earth be good for me, I shall have it, for my Father has it all in possession. If Favour in the Eyes of Man be good for me, I shall have it, for the Spring of every Motion in the Heart of Man is in God's Hand. My Dear ——— now seems to be dying; I am certain that God is all-wise, and every thing is done by him for the best: shall I hold back any thing that is his own, when he requires it? or say, I must have this or the other thing, when he withholds it? No, God forbid! He is all-wise, and when I consider the Excellency of his glorious Attributes, I am satisfy'd with all his Dealings.

M E D. XI.

Her most amiable View.

THE loveliest Sight in my Eyes of this whole World, is a Person in the lively Exercise of Grace; to see one expressing Faith in God, Love to him, Hatred of Sin, Desires after Holiness, and breathing after the sinless State of Perfection. All the Grandeur

and Pleasures of this Life are to me but empty Baubles compar'd herewith.

MED. XII.

Her Admiration of Providence.

WHEN I consider the various Dealings of God in his Providence towards me, I can't but admire to think, that every Turn of Life, Alteration of Circumstances, Transplantation here and there, his disposing the Minds of People either for or against me, my walking sometimes through rough and tempestuous Ways, sometimes through calm and serene ; sometimes being cast down, and other times lifted up : I can't, I say, but admire that all this towards such a Worm as I, should be to make his Praise the more glorious in the other World, as most certainly it will.

MED. XIII.

Her Complaint of Herself.

OH how are the Times alter'd with me ! and how do I now carry it to what I once did ! When God was pleas'd first to work on me, how tender and careful ! But now, how harden'd and careless ! Oh how
sweet

sweet was a Sabbath ! how delightful were the Thoughts of God and Christ ! and how did I wonder at Christians, that when they met, their time was all taken up about the World, and no more was spent in Discourses of God and Christ and Heaven ! Oh how dearly did I love Retirement from the World, and Converse with God ! How precious was a Jesus, how delightful was Prayer, and how far in this nature might I go on !

MED. XIV.

Her Complaint continu'd.

OH how fast do Declensions come on ! Indeed I have not miss'd kneeling before God every Night and Morning ever since his Word (impres'd with Power) and his Spirit gave, as I hope, a saving Touch. Yet so bad has it been, that Prayer has been as a Task, and I have been glad when it was over. To miss it I did not dare, remembering that Apostacy first began here ; but Oh how have I presum'd to trifle in it ! How do I see that I can do nothing of my self, by finding how hardly I have been drag'd to converse with that God, in whose Company I once took so much Delight ? Affliction is indeed much abated, and the Creature is more than it has been. The World has got a great Room in
my

my Affections. Lord! let me stop, and sink no lower! I that have wrestled so earnestly for saving Grace for others, have need now to come with the same Earnestness for my self. Are the Principles of Grace inlaid, or no? If they be, Lord stir them up in act, and let not the World thus run away with my Heart!

MED. XV.

Her Desire to praise God.

OH that I had the Tongue of an Angel, that would never, no, never be weary in praising of my kind God! Oh that I could praise him, and ever ever praise him! Oh that every Creature-Comfort might draw forth fresh Shouts of Praise, and be as Steps to that Ladder which reach'd Heaven! How can I make a Stop, when Pen and Heart do go together? Blessed be God for Affliction, because it teaches how to walk humbly in Prosperity, and makes the Duty of Praise more sweet. Blessed be God for Affliction, for now I know from whom my All comes. 'Tis Sin that robs me of Comfort, and 'tis Kindness in God to strike me when I sin. Blessed be God for every one of his Dealings towards me ever since I came into the World. For the future I hope I shan't immoderately fasten on
Creature-

Creature-Enjoyments, but look up to that God in Songs of Praise, who gives them, and makes them to be Comforts, and who can in a Moment take them away, or make them heavy Crosses. Blessed be God for all his Kindness, which no Tongue can express. Oh how true are all his Promises! Oh how faithfully doth he fulfil every one of them to those that trust in him! *Blessed is she indeed that believes, for there shall be a Performance of those things that are promis'd her of the Lord.* Does God say to any, I will be to thee a God? Most certainly then he will be so, I have found him so, and speak what I feel. Praise him, praise him, O my Soul, for the Operations of his Spirit in his Providences!

MED. XVI.

Her Prospect moderated.

GREAT are the Prospects of Comfort I behold. Every thing seems to have a smiling Aspect; and had not God prepar'd my way by Affliction, I should have form'd vast Expectations from the World; I should have said, now my Mountain stands strong, things are as I would have them: How beautiful are the Breasts of the Creature! How sweet a Place is this Earth! Why may not

I fix here for ever? But I have seen, and bless'd be God I have so! that my Mountain, tho never so strong, is but as Ice that melts away; and that the more delight I take in the World, the likelier it is to prove Bitterness in the End; that the higher my Hopes, the deeper my Falls. In all things Vexation and Sorrow at one time or other, more or less. Therefore, O my Soul, still cherish a holy Thirst to awake in Christ's Likeness, to behold him Face to Face; for then as no more Sin, so no more Sorrow, but not till then! The greater Prospect thou hast of living comfortably here, the more hearty may thy Praises be. Blessed be God for every thing I have in Hand or in Hope. Praise the Lord, O my Soul!

M E D. XVII.

Her Thoughts upon entring on a new State of Life.

OH how great is the Care God takes of me! and how kind are all the Methods of his Providence! Hitherto hast thou help'd me. And now I am entring upon a new State of Life, unable of my self to encounter with the many Difficulties attending it, or to perform the Duties belonging to it; I distrust my own Wisdom or Strength to
guide

guide my Steps. Every new Relation calls to new Duty; and to perform these in the Exercise of Grace, how hard! Yet I have hope that Promise will still hold its Virtue (*I will be to thee a God*) in time of Prosperity as well as in Adversity; and my God can make the one a mean to knit my Heart more firmly to himself, as well as the other a Lance to let out my Corruption. But the Greatness of my Sins will not allow me to expect any other than Spots of black among my white. Affliction will take its Turn as long as Sin remains. God will sometimes strike as well as smile.

M E D. XVIII.


Her Expostulations and Wishes.

LORD, what's the matter? Why hidest thou thy Face? My former time of Life, wherein so many outward Afflictions attended me, was methinks more pleasant than this. Thy Smiles, O Lord, I am sure are sweet, tho all the World frown. Oh what a Condition am I now in! I forget the God of all my Mercys, and after the many sensible Favours I have receiv'd, I act as tho I had not known him. *O that I might have my Request, and that God would grant me the thing, that I long for!* And this is, that I might feel his Spirit

Spirit working as powerfully, and with as great a Force as formerly I have felt it. O that I could feel the Word making my Soul to glow, as it has done in the coldest Night! O that I could feel it come (as every Sermon almost us'd to do) as tho it were a particular Message sent from God to me! Oh how full have I been of Zeal to promote the Glory of God, infomuch that I have wish'd my Flesh was Brass, and my Sinews Iron, that I might never be weary. I have grudg'd the Time that has been taken up in sleeping, eating, visiting, &c. Blessed be God I see the Emptiness of this World, and therefore give up my self, Soul and Body, to the Disposal of infinite Wisdom. I beg ever to have my Heart kept from fixing upon any thing here. Health, Wealth, Friends, near and dear Relations are passing.



FINIS.


Mrs. *CLISSOULD'S*

F U N E R A L

S E R M O N.


[Redacted]

Mr. CLISSOLD'S

Funeral

SEERSON



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Su

Mrs. *CLISSOULD'S*
Funeral Sermon.

LUKE i. 45.

*And blessed is she that believ'd : for
there shall be a Performance of those
Things which were told her from
the Lord.*

THIS Text was given me by that
serious Christian (known to many
of you) Mrs. *Cliffould*, as she was
in the Extremity of her last Con-
flict, with her Desire I would make it the
Subject of her Funeral Discourse.

F

Thus

Thus it has been frequent with good People, when going out of the World, to leave behind them some Portion of Holy Writ that has been deeply impress'd upon their Mind ; partly to testify their Experience of the Truth of God's Grace, partly for a Memorial of his distinguishing Love to their Souls : as also to let us know the Frame of their Spirit in dying ; and finally, that from their Example others might receive Instruction and Encouragement.

These, I am persuaded, were the good Ends our deceas'd Friend had above all things in her View ; which therefore to promote, I shall now, with God's Assistance, make it my particular Endeavour.

The Words are part of the gratulatory Salutation, which *Elizabeth* the Mother of *John* Baptist made to *Mary* the Mother of our Lord. To lead you into them, I must crave leave to reflect a little upon the History in this Chapter.

When the glorious and long expected Time of fulfilling the Promises concerning the *Messiah*, and particularly his Incarnation, was at hand, the Angel *Gabriel* is sent to *Zacharias* the Priest to admonish him of it ; which he did as he was offering Incense within the Temple. And to confirm the Message, he tells him, that his Wife *Elizabeth* (who had been all along naturally barren, and was now so through Age) *should bear a Son*, and that he
should

should be the Fore-runner of the Saviour. *Zacharias*, tho a good Man, had not Faith to believe it, and was thereupon immediately struck *dumb*, as a Punishment of his Unbelief.

After this, the same Angel is sent to the *Virgin Mary*, a Person very mean in outward Condition, but in this Particular favour'd above all Women. The Message brought her was, that she also should *Conceive and bring forth a Son*, who should be call'd, *the Son of the Highest*, and unto whom *the Lord God* would give the *Throne of his Father David*, &c. And to confirm her Faith in all this, she is refer'd to what God had already done to her Cousin *Elizabeth*, who was now six Months gone with Child. Nothing could appear more incredible, yet she receives it (after another manner than *Zacharias*) with most dutiful Submission, acquiescing in it and saying, *Behold the Handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy Word*, Ver. 38.

The Angel being departed, *Mary* hastens, with Diligence equal to her Joy, to the House of *Zacharias*, to receive the Confirmation of her Faith, and to rejoice with her Kinswoman. No sooner had she saluted *Elizabeth*, than her Cousin being fill'd with the *Holy Ghost*, returns it, and says with a loud Voice: *Blessed art thou among Women, and Blessed is the Fruit of thy Womb. And whence is this to me, That the Mother of my Lord should come to me?*

68 Mrs. CLISSOULD'S

For lo as soon as the Voice of thy Salutation sounded in mine Ears, the Babe leap'd in my Womb for Joy. Then follow the Words of my Text:

And blessed is she that believ'd, for there shall be a Performance of those things, which were told her from the Lord.

Nothing can be more moving than the whole History. Should I speak to all the Particulars, they are so many and so engaging, that it would prevent the main Design I am come upon. I must therefore confine my self strictly to what is before me. In discoursing upon which I shall,

- I. Consider the Words in their immediate Reference to the Blessed *Virgin*.
- II. Accommodate them to the general Case of Believers. And
- III. Apply them.

I. I shall consider them in their immediate Reference to the Blessed *Virgin*. And here we have the following things to observe.

1. The Encomium that is given of her: *She believ'd*. It appears she did so from what has been mention'd. But that which in a peculiar manner calls for our regard, is the Excellence of her Faith. This, upon consideration, we shall find to be extraordinary. *First*, Because the things to be believ'd, were
above

above the Power of Nature, surpassing humane Understanding, yea, exceeding all the Miracles that had ever been perform'd in the World before; and therefore to believe them must be one of the noblest Instances of Faith that ever was.

Again, it was extraordinary, considering the Person believing. *She believ'd.* A Woman not having ordinarily that Vigour of Mind and Largeness of Capacity, and naturally more given to Suspicion and Doubt. A young Person too, and as such not having had long Experience.

Lastly, Her discouraging Circumstances may be consider'd: Being a Person obscure and unobserv'd, in outward Condition, mean and afflicted. For her to admit the Thought, that she should bear in her Womb the *Lord of Glory*, and be Mother of the World's Saviour: To believe this in contradiction to the receiv'd Opinion of her Nation, who expected the Coming of the *Messiah* to be with much outward Splendor and Glory. For her, I say, a poor, unlearned, private Person, to believe things so incredible to Nature and Reason (when *Zacharias*, a Man, a Priest, aged, learned, eminent, and the Message to him of more appearing Possibility, could not believe) was very great and extraordinary. But,

2. We have to observe the Blessing that is pronounc'd upon this: *Blessed is she that be-*

liev'd ; i. e. She is blessed, and shall be blessed. Blessed indeed, not only as God had vouchsafed her the Honour of conceiving her Saviour, but chiefly for that she had Faith to believe in him.

Elizabeth pronounceth this also by way of Congratulation. It is as if with Hands lift up she had said; Behold the blessed Woman! or O thou blessed among Women! With whom none of the Queens or Princesses of this Earth are to be compar'd. She does not envy *Mary* her Privilege (having enough to bless God for on her own account) but rejoices with her, and congratulates her Happiness. The same temper should we discover: when we behold the Blessings God hath bestow'd upon others, we should take Satisfaction therein, and rejoice in their Happiness, even when that too does exceed our own. *Elizabeth* having pronounc'd her *bles-sed*, we have,

3. The Ground or Reason of it in these Words: *For there shall be a Performance of those Things which were told her from the Lord.*

This was spoken by the Spirit of Prophecy, further to confirm *Mary* in the Certainty of those Things she had believ'd, and likewise to assure her she was under no Delusion; that the Angel who appear'd to her was from God; that what he said, was by Commission from him, and that it was all true. As to the Particular relating to her Cousin *Elizabeth*,

beth, she found it actually as it had been told her; and being so, she had reason to accept it as a sure Pledg of all the rest, which having been told her from the Lord (who was able to perform it, and whose Word stood engag'd) could not fail of their Accomplishment. For *the Strength of Israel will not lye nor repent, for he is not a Man that he should repent*, 1 Sam. 15. 29. Having thus consider'd the Words in their immediate Reference to the *Virgin Mary*, I shall,

II. Accommodate them to the general Case of Believers, in the following Instructions. As,

1st. *It is the Honour of a Saint, and an Act of Obedience most pleasing to God, to believe his Promises.*

2ly. *They that believe are blessed.* And,

3ly. *They cannot but be so, seeing there shall be a Performance of what they have believ'd.*

1. *It is the Honour of a Saint, and an Act of Obedience most pleasing to God, to believe his Promises.*

Faith is the Profession of every Christian, and the distinguishing Character of God's People. It is the Life we are call'd to practise as long as we are in this World.

The adequate Object of Faith is the whole Word of God, but here we are speaking of the Promises. Now these are of

various Kinds, some of a *Temporal*, others of a *Spiritual* and *Eternal* Import. The former are but *conditional Objects* of Faith, the latter *absolute* and *peremptory*, and about which as Christians we should be chiefly conversant.

Here our Faith must have its Retrospect and its Prospect. Many things we are requir'd to believe when looking backwards. Of this nature are all those Promises which have had their Accomplishment already, most of which to Believers under the Old Testament were *future*, to us are *past*: Such as the Incarnation, Birth, Life, Sufferings, Death, Burial, Resurrection and Ascension of the Son of God.

Again, There are some Promises, the Accomplishment of which we are to believe, so soon as *the Term or Condition on our Part requir'd, is perform'd*. Such as the Remission of our Sins upon our Repentance, the being accepted as Righteous in God's Sight upon our receiving of Christ, the Bestowment of the Spirit, and of Grace, upon our sincere Application for the same.

And lastly, There are several Promises which we are to believe with respect to *future Time*, and of which we should endeavour to be as certain as if they were present. Such are those which relate to the Church of God in general, which are yet to be fulfil'd; and such as with respect to our selves, are the Ascension of our Souls into Heaven, immediately

ly upon their Release from the Body, the Resurrection of that very Body, the Certainty of a future Judgment, and those everlasting Rewards, which shall be bestow'd upon Believers.

Now to believe these things with a Divine and steddy Faith, is truly honourable to the Christian, and highly pleasing to God.

1. *Honourable to the Christian*, as it indicates the noble Frame and Temper of his Mind, a Spirit elevated and rais'd above what is common. The Life of a Believer does as far exceed that of a Man in his natural Estate, as the rational Life does that of Vegetation or Sense. For as the Objects of our Faith do unconceivably transcend those of Sight, so the Mind that is employ'd about them, derives a proportionable Excellence. Hereby we ascend out of that Abyss of Darkness into which we were fallen, and make our Entrance into the World of Light. We associate our selves with Heaven. We come to know Him, *whom to know is Life eternal*: To see Him who is invisible, and to enter upon the Participation of those Joys and Pleasures, which neither we our selves know how to utter, nor wicked Men how to conceive.

Again, Faith is an Honour to the Christian, as it enables him to the noblest Achievements. By this he devotes himself to God, vanquishes his most beloved Lusts, conquers his unruly Passions, obtains glorious Victory
over

over the World. By this he becomes patient in Sufferings, yea joyful in Tribulations, and triumphant over Death. The Heroes of this World acquire Renown by defeating Armies, taking Towns and conquering Kingdoms: But the true Believer wrestles with far more formidable Enemies, and carries his Conquests farther: *For by Faith he overcomes the whole World*, 1 John 5. 4. But,

2ly. As thus to believe is honourable to the Christian, so is it highly pleasing to God; in as much as herein he also is greatly honour'd and exalted. Faith sets him above all, accounting every thing else (that is brought into Comparison with him) as *less than nothing, and Vanity*, Isa. 40. 17. It is the utmost Homage we can pay to God. Hereby we adore his Majesty, acknowledg his Truth, reverence his Authority, submit to his Wisdom, profess his Power, and confide in his Goodness. It is the greatest Honour we can render to the *Lord Jesus*, as it brings him the Fruit of the Travail of his Soul, helping us to commit our selves and the greatest Concerns we have to his Care and Management. It is the highest Ascription of Glory to the *Holy Ghost*, as it owns his Revelations, and yields to his Dictates and Motions. To conclude, it pays all the Honour possible to the blessed *Trinity*, as it inclines us to embrace the whole Counsel of God, and forms us to an universal Compliance with his Will.

Now

Now, as for all these Reasons, nothing can reflect a greater Honour upon us Mortals than the steady Belief of the Promises; so God hath been pleas'd abundantly to testify how highly grateful and acceptable this is unto himself. It were endless to mention Places, since the Encomiums of Faith are to be found almost every where in the Scriptures. I proceed to the

Second General. *They that believe are blessed.*

This is a necessary Consequence from what was last said: for if Faith be so pleasing to God, it cannot be suppos'd he would let it go without some Testimony of his Approbation; and wherein can he show his Approbation, that shall not at the same time prove a Blessing to his Creature?

What is here spoken to *Mary*, was not to be so appropriated to Her, but that others might make their Improvement of it. *This is written for our Learning, that we also through Patience and Comfort of the Scriptures might have Hope,* Rom. 15. 4. Some are of Opinion, that when *Elizabeth* saluted *Mary*, there were others standing by: and therefore having made a particular Address to her before in those Words foregoing, *Blessed art thou among Women*; she now speaks in the third Person, turning her self to those that were present, saying, *Blessed is she that believ'd.* By this admonishing them of the Happiness
of

of those that believe, that they also might put in for a Share in the Benediction.

It was, doubtless, a singular Privilege and Honour which *Mary* had above all Women, to bear the *Lord Jesus Christ*: But this would have been but of little avail, had she not believ'd in him as *her Saviour*, that was her Son. And as to this last, *Mary* had no Privilege above other Believers. In point of believing, others were upon the same Level with her, for herein *There is no respect of Persons with God*: In regard of Filiation, *Christ* was the Son of *Mary* only; but in respect of *Salvation*, he is the common Redeemer. The Blessing was annex'd to Faith, in a manner peculiar above what it was to the Band of natural Relation. She was blessed, not so much for that *Christ* was born of her, as that she believ'd in him. When the Woman cry'd out to our Lord in the Days of his Flesh, saying, *Blessed is the Womb that bare thee, and the Paps which thou hast suck'd*: He replies, *Yea, rather Blessed are they that hear the Word of God, that is, so hear as to believe and obey it*, *Luke 11. 17*. And when upon another Occasion it was signify'd that his Mother and Brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him; he answers, *Who is my Mother, and who are my Brethren?* And Stretching forth his Hand towards his Disciples, says, *Behold my Mother and my Brethren! For whosoever shall do the Will of my Father which*

is in Heaven, the same is my Brother and Sister and Mother, Matt. 12. 49. And what this Will of God is he tells us, John 6. 29. viz. That we believe on him whom he hath sent.

The principal Blessing then appertains to Faith, and wherever this is found, no external Circumstances shall be an Obstruction to it: Whether we be high or low, noble or ignoble, if we believe, we are accepted of God. Herein the Rich have no Privilege above the Poor, nor the Poor above the Rich. With him there is no Difference. *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither Bond nor Free, there is neither Male nor Female, for we are all one in Christ Jesus, Gal. 3. 28.* Whatever People are with respect to their outward Condition and Circumstances, upon their believing the Gospel pronounces them blessed. Which leads me to the

Third and last General, *viz. The Proof That they are blessed;* and they certainly are so, because *There shall be a Performance of what they have believ'd.* We may argue their Blessedness,

1. From the Things they have believ'd. And then,

2. From the certain Performance of those Things.

1st. From the Things they have believ'd: Which are of such a Nature as carry with them the greatest Felicity and Blessedness. And these with respect to themselves, among
other

other things, are their spiritual Union to Christ, whereby they become as it were *Members of his Body, of his Flesh, and of his Bones*, Eph. 5. 30. and as such, are the Objects of his special Care and Love. Again, They believe that God in Christ *will receive them, and will be a Father unto them*, 2 Cor. 6. 17, 18. That *He will be merciful to their Unrighteousness, and will remember their Sins and their Iniquities no more*, Heb. 8. 12. That *He will give them Grace and Glory, and withhold no good thing from them*, &c. Psal. 84. 11.

And, my Brethren, how can they be otherwise than blessed, who upon believing shall be united to Christ, be reconcil'd unto God, receive the Pardon of their Sins, have the holy Spirit of Christ dwelling in their Hearts, to guide, sanctify, comfort and preserve them? How can they be otherwise than blessed, who shall be maintain'd and protected whilst they live, and have Peace when they die? whose Souls, as soon as they are releas'd from the Body, shall enter into *Paradise*, and whose Bodies shall be rais'd in Honour and Glory at the Resurrection? Who shall be own'd of Christ, and openly acquitted in the Day of Judgment, and made perfectly happy both as to Soul and Body in the full Enjoyment of God for ever? But,

2ly. We may argue their Blessedness from the certain Performance of these Things. Now this is evident from what God has done
for

for them already, and from those further Securities he has given them for the Performance of the rest.

Already, even now, they are possess'd of part of their Blessedness. They have now the Beginnings of what e'er long they shall have in Perfection. Therefore our Lord speaks in this manner, John 6. 47. *Verily, verily I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting Life*; that is, he hath now a Right to it by the Covenant of Grace, he hath it also in the Root and Principle, and shall shortly have the full Possession. The Grace of God which is implanted in their Hearts at present, is a sure Pledg in their Hands of what is to come. They are *seal'd with that Holy Spirit of Promise, which is the Earnest of their Inheritance, until the Redemption of the purchas'd Possession*, Eph. 1. 13, 14. The Indwelling of the Spirit, and the Beginnings of Grace in Believers here, are an infallible Token of their future Blessedness, as the first Fruits are of the Harvest. Grace is but Glory begun.

Besides these, there are other Securities for the Accomplishment of all that has been told them from the Lord. There is the *Power* of God, with whom nothing is impossible; his *Truth*, whereby he cannot deny himself; his *Faithfulness*, that engages him to the Performance of his Word; his *Wisdom*, that is always most tender of his Honour; his
Mercy

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Mercy and Goodness; his *Pity and Compassion*, which will never allow him to deceive or disappoint his Creatures; his *Immutability*, whereby he cannot alter his Purpose, or change the thing that is gone out of his Mouth.

Again, To all this I might add a Cloud of Witnesses, who in all Ages have been ready to attest the Faithfulness of God to his Promises, as having by Experience found their Accomplishment in what relates to Time, and who when dying were fill'd with an Assurance of that everlasting Happiness, they were going to inherit. These are some of those Topicks, from whence we may infer the Certainty of the Blessedness of those that believe.

The only thing which I presume can be offer'd as an Objection to what has been prov'd, is this: That some have profess'd to believe the Promises of God, who yet have not seen them fulfil'd in those Instances they have desir'd.

I shall only answer for the present, That if there be any thing in this Objection, it is owing to the wrong Apprehensions which in some Cases People may have form'd with respect to the Promises of God. Now this may be when they understand those things as if absolutely promis'd, which are only so conditionally, or under a certain Limitation; that is, if God shall see them meet for us,

as

as is the Case in temporal Blessings. If therefore, at any time, they fail of their Expectations as to these things, this is not chargeable upon God, as tho he was not true to his Word, but upon themselves, as not understanding the nature of the Promise.

If the Objection be urg'd with respect even to such Blessings as are absolutely promis'd, I must reply with the Apostle, *Let God be true, tho every Man be a Lyar*, Rom. 3, 4. He never fails of his Word; and therefore it must be, that either the Faith of those who shall make this Objection is not of the right stamp, whatever they pretend (and for which Reason it concerns them to examine themselves) or they overlook (which is too common) what God has already done for them in truth, tho not in so discernable a degree and measure as they would desire. As for Perfection, that is a Blessing we must wait for. Having said what I judg sufficient to these Objections, I come,

III. And lastly, to the Improvement of all that has been said. There are many things I might offer, but I shall content my self with the few following. As,

I. We may be convinc'd of the mistaken Notion which many People have of Happiness. Indeed most do place it in the Liberties of a sensual Life; in what does gratify

Mens carnal Inclinations and Appetites. Hence their Thoughts and Pains are mostly taken up in making *provision for the Flesh, that they might obey it in the Lusts thereof.* But how much happier is that Life which is employ'd in the noble Exercises of Faith, whereby Men realize to themselves those things which give not only a purer Entertainment, but yield a Satisfaction that is solid and lasting? There is a wide difference between a Life of Faith, and that of Sense. The one is the noblest Life that is possible for mortal Men to live, the other is as mean and dishonourable. To be govern'd only by Sense is to live like a Brute; and for a Man to do thus, is to put himself vastly beneath that Rank and Order in which God by Nature had plac'd him. It is the greatest Debasement of his Being, and makes him so much viler than the very Beasts, by how much he abuses those nobler Capacities wherewith God has endow'd him. And is this the way to be blessed? No, *my Brethren*, true Blessedness is to be obtain'd only by Faith. This, as you have seen, will be your Honour, and will entitle you to those unspeakable Privileges and Advantages which will make you the most happy of all People in this World, and perfectly blessed in another.

2. Are they pronounc'd blessed who believe, then how free and open does Happiness lie

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to those who hear the joyful Sound of the Gospel? It is but *believe, and thou art blessed*. What more reasonable and condescending Term of Blessedness could there be propos'd than this? This is what every one with equal Reason may aspire after and hope for. Distinction of Sex can make no difference here. How ridiculously and contemptibly soever some may speak of the Female Kind; yet *She* shall be call'd blessed that believes. External Circumstances shall make no difference in this case. The Poor as well as the Rich, the Unlearned as well as the Learned are capable of believing, and therefore equally capable of Blessedness. None need discourage themselves. There are many who may despair of acquiring much Knowledg in learned Arts and Sciences, may despair of arriving at the Top of worldly Grandeur; but none need despair of believing, who use their Endeavours in seeking this Grace, and attending upon the Means which God hath appointed. With respect to Faith, no one can pretend a greater Privilege by Nature than another, since all are alike; not but that Sovereign Grace is at liberty to act in whom and how it pleases.

3. We may infer the Misery of Unbelievers; for if they only are blessed who believe, they must of course be accurs'd and miserable who have no Faith. They can never enjoy true Blessedness, which is promis'd only to

those that believe. And whilst they are shut out from this, they must needs be in a woful Condition; nor can their enjoying the present Comforts of Life, tho in the greatest abundance, alter much their Case. For tho they be ever so rich and honourable as to this World, yet if they have no Peace with God, no Remission of Sins, no Hope of Heaven, they are most unhappy and miserable. O how great a Difference do those few Words make in the States of Men! *He that believeth shall be sav'd, but he that believeth not shall be damn'd*, Mark 16. 16. How wide a Gulf is there fix'd betwixt them that believe, and them that believe not, through which there is no passing from one to the other!

4. Of all the Benefits which God hath bestow'd upon Christians, they should principally rejoice in this inestimable Gift of Faith. This is an infinitely greater Mercy, than if he had heap'd all worldly and temporal Blessings possible upon you. This is a greater Favour, than *Mary's* being honour'd to conceive Christ, simply consider'd, would have been; for that (how distinguishing a Privilege soever) without Faith in the Redeemer would never have procur'd her Salvation. How should we rejoice if God hath made us real Believers! We should ever praise him, because we are ever happy. This should make us forget our Sorrows; glory in our Tribulations; despise the

the World's Threatnings : yea it should make us smile (even as our deceas'd Friend) in Death, and triumph over that last Enemy ; saying, *O Death, where is thy Sting ! O Grave, where is thy Victory !* For by Faith we may persuade our selves, *That neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor Height, nor Depth, nor any other Creature shall be able to separate us from the Love of God, which is in Christ Jesus,* Rom. 8.

5. The Consideration of the Blessedness of them that believe, should be a constant Spring of Comfort to us upon the Death of our believing Relatives and Friends. For since they liv'd and dy'd in Faith, we may be sure all things are well with them. They are certainly blessed and happy. There is now an end of all their Sorrow and Affliction. They are enter'd upon endless Joy and unspeakable Happiness. They are but gone to enjoy those things which were told them from the Lord. Now are they reaping the blessed Fruit of all their Prayers and Tears, their Faith and Hope, and all that God did promise to perform unto them. We may weep for ourselves who are left behind, to work and toil, to conflict with Sin and Satan and many Evils ; but not for them who are at rest from their Labours, and are enter'd into the Joy of their Lord. To mourn excessively

cessively for them, is as if we envy'd or grudg'd them their Happiness. They are now inheriting the glorious Promises they dy'd in the Belief of; should it not quiet and satisfy us that they are so? Should we not acquiesce at the Thought of it? yea, add a hearty *Amen*, so be it? And rather endure with Patience any Hardships ourselves, than wish it otherwise with them; nay, rather keep a Day of Thanksgiving for their Happiness, as it is reported the antient Christians did for the Departure of holy Souls? Let us rejoice for their Sakes, that they are got safe into Harbour, and have weather'd all the Storms of this tempestuous Sea. Such Considerations as these should have weight with those who are afflicted at the Loss of that excellent Person, whose Death hath been the Occasion of this Discourse. She was one of those that believ'd; yea, she was *strong in Faith, giving Glory to God, being fully persuaded that what he had promis'd he was able also to perform.* She judg'd herself blessed upon this account, and therefore chose this Text above all others, as she lay a dying, to be the Subject of her Funeral Discourse. You knew her manner of Life and Conversation, and you were several of you Witnesses to her exemplary Death, when like the antient Worthies recorded in *Heb. 11.* she *dy'd in Faith:* Wherefore as she did with Comfort

Comfort recite the Words of my Text herself, even when in the very Agony of Death; so now may we say as *Elizabeth* did to *Mary*, varying only the Tense, *And Blessed is she that believ'd, for there is now a Performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.* What was further said of her under this Head, is more largely mention'd in her Life, to which the Reader is refer'd.

6. Are they blessed that believe: Then be persuaded to the Practice of this Duty. True Blessedness is no where to be had but in those things which the Word of God does recommend and offer unto us; and there is no way of obtaining an Interest in them, but by Faith.

Suffer then a Word of Exhortation. What Pains will Men be at, and to what Hazards will they expose themselves for some little, yea uncertain Advantages of this World! And shall we do nothing to inherit those glorious Promises which the Gospel assures us shall be perform'd to them that believe? Have others believ'd, and are they blessed; shall not their Example excite our Imitation? We want not for Encouragements, seeing we have the same that others have had before us, and in some Respects more. We have the same Warrant to authorize us, the same Blessings to invite us, the same Motives and Arguments to persuade

us, and the same Spirit offering his powerful Assistance. There is nothing in our Circumstances that shall obstruct our Blessedness if we sincerely believe. The Promises are as freely made to us as any; we may lay hold of them, and shall herein be as welcome to God, and may as certainly depend upon the Performance of them as ever any did. And since it is so, permit me to recommend to you the Exercise of Faith upon the Promises, both whilst you live, and also when you come to die.

1st. Endeavour to exercise Faith upon the Promises of God so long as you live. This is the Way to be blessed. It is said, *the Just shall live by Faith*, i. e. shall not only be acquitted in God's Sight, and freed from the condemnatory Sentence of the Law, *Gal. 3. 11.* but shall hereby be enabled to persevere in Grace, and hold on in a Course of Righteousness and Holiness to their Lives End. *Heb. 10. 38.* It is the essential Property and distinguishing Character of a Christian, *to walk by Faith and not by Sight*, *2 Cor. 5. 7.* It has been the constant Practice of the People of God in all Ages, to regulate their whole Life and Conversation by the Dictates and Influences of this Divine Principle. Now it is our Duty to imitate their Example. *Be ye Followers of them who through Faith and Patience have inherited the Promises*, *Heb. 6. 12.*
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They that are utter Strangets to this Way of living, know nothing of the Christian Life. The Necessity of believing should enforce the Practice of it.

But again, The Advantages that will accrue to us hereby, should highly recommend it to us. This will animate and quicken us to all the Parts of our Duty, will preserve and cherish in us the Graces of the Divine Life; this will make us successful Combatants against all the Temptations our spiritual Enemies may lay in our way, either to allure or to affright us. This will procure to us a *Peace that passes all Understanding*, and give us some Experience of those Joys which are unspeakable and full of Glory, 1 Pet. 1. 8. Hereby we shall have a Foretaste of Heaven, and partake of the delicious Fruits of the Land of Promise before we enter into it.

After all, there is nothing will so temper our present Sufferings, or yield us so much Comfort under all the Travail and Afflictions of Life, as this will do. We are told, that *through much Tribulation we must enter into the Kingdom of God*, Acts 14. 22. And that *many are the Afflictions of the Righteous*, Ps. 34. 19. But what can so effectually comfort us under all these as a firm Belief of the Promises? All other Comforts are weak, unstable and insufficient; but this is as *an Anchor of the Soul, both sure and stedfast*, in all the Storms and Billows of the

the World, and which entreth into that within the Veil, Heb. 6. 19. Faith will enable us to rejoice in *Hope of the Glory of God*, and even to glory in our Tribulations, Rom. 5. 2, 3. For our light Affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory; while we look not at the Things which are seen, but at the Things which are not seen: for the Things which are seen are Temporal, but the Things which are not seen are Eternal. 2 Cor. 4. 17, 18. But,

2ly. Let us make it our business so to prepare ourselves now, as that we may exercise a lively Faith in the Promises of God when we come to die: That we may not only live but die in Faith. By this the antient Patriarchs acquir'd immortal Renown. *These all dy'd in Faith*, Heb. 11. 13. Herein we ought also to imitate their Example, as well as that of our departed Friend, who held fast her Confidence and the rejoicing of her Hope firm unto the End. Nothing can be of greater Concern to us than this.

We should lay up a large Stock and Measure of this Grace, because we shall need it much when we come to die. Faith hath then its greatest Work to do. It may require a higher Degree of Faith to die as a Christian, than to live so, because we may then meet with the forest Conflicts. There may be many things to encounter with besides
Pain

Pain and Sickness, and other Circumstances that may attend our Death; as the Reflections of our Consciences, the awful Sense of our approaching Change, the furious Onsets of Satan, each of which will try our Faith; and should they all meet together, they would make it difficult for us to stand in that evil Hour.

Again, There are other Reasons which should induce us to prepare ourselves for the Exercise of a lively Faith in Death, such as that hereby we shall bring the greatest Honour we are capable to God; for this will be a nobler Homage and an higher Ascription of Glory to him, than ever we render'd in the whole Course of our Life. This will also reflect the greatest Honour upon ourselves; moreover, it will be a moving Example and Encouragement to others. It will likewise gain the highest Approbation from God, and infallibly secure to us those everlasting Blessings and Rewards which we believe and hope for.

And to say no more, if when we are taking our final Leave of all the visible Comforts of this Life, we shall be able to see our Interest in the Promises; how strong a Support will it be, and what reviving Cordials will it hand out unto us under the Pains and Languishings of a dying Body! Oh how happy will it be for us, when

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our Heart and our Flesh faileth, to be able to say, but God is the Strength of our Heart and our Portion for ever, Psal. 73. 26. When Death is shaking the *Earthly House of this Tabernacle* in pieces, to know we have a *Building of God, an House not made with Hands, Eternal in the Heavens*, 2 Cor. 5. 1. And that as soon as we have finish'd our Course, we shall receive a *Crown of Righteousness*, which is laid up for us, and which the Lord the righteous Judge will give us in that Day, 1 Tim. 4. 8. Then God shall wipe away all Tears from our Eyes; and there shall be no more Death, neither Sorrow, nor Crying, neither shall there be any more Pain: for the former Things shall be pass'd away, Rev. 21. 4. What a stable Support must all this afford us in the Hour of Death! And if this will be the blessed Effect and Consequence of a sound and practical Belief of the Promises, how much shall we be our own Friends in labouring after it; but what inexcusable Madness and Folly shall we betray in the Neglect of it! I shall conclude with a few

D I R E C T I O N S.

1. **P**RAY earnestly for it. *Faith is the Gift of God*, Eph. 2. 8. It is our Duty to believe, but the Strength whereby we must do

do so is of God. And it being in his Gift, nothing can be more reasonable or decent than that we supplicate him for it; nor should we herein grudge our Pains, seeing it may be had upon such cheap Terms, and we have so much to assure us that he is more ready to give than we are to ask.

2. Attend the Word. *Faith cometh by Hearing, and Hearing by the Word of God*, Rom. 10. 17. The preaching of the Word is the great Means which God hath appointed for the working Faith in us; and it is admirably adapted to this Purpose, as it unfolds to us the Nature of the Promises, displays their Excellence, and by all manner of persuasive Arguments engages to the embracing of them.

3. Meditate on the Examples of those that have believ'd. These will convince us of the Feasibleness of what is requir'd, encourage our Endeavours, and provoke our Emulation. For shall others of the same Nature and Capacities with ourselves, subject to the same Infirmities, Temptations and Incumbrances, break through *their* Difficulties, and acquire Renown and Blessedness by believing; and shall not *we*, who have the same or more plentiful Means and equal Assistance, aspire after the same Glory and Happiness? Surely the Consideration of it should stimulate and provoke us.

4. And

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4. And *lastly*, Consider the absolute Necessity of believing. There can be no enjoying the Promises without it. If we believe we are blessed, but if not, we are accurs'd and miserable for ever. *To whom sware he that they should not enter into his Rest, but to them that believ'd not?* Heb. 3. 18. What Necessity then is there like that of believing? Not only does our Peace in this World, but our Happiness in Eternity, depend upon it. Shall we not then exert ourselves? The Plea of Impotency cannot excuse us from doing what we are able, tho that without God is next to nothing. When our Saviour said to the Man who had a wither'd Hand, *Stretch forth thine Hand*, he did not plead Impotency, as in that Case he might have done as much as we in this; but he made an Offer at it, and in endeavouring to *stretch forth his Hand it was restor'd*, Mark 3. 5. If we in the Use of God's appointed Means are diligent in our Endeavours, we have abundant Reason to expect the Divine Concurrence and Blessing.

Thus let us labour after this most necessary and precious Grace of Faith. Let us take care to act under the powerful Influences of it during the whole Course of our Life. Let us be continually improving and growing in it, that so when we shall come to the End of our Days, we may then express it after
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the most noble manner and in the noblest Instances, such as by a stedfast Persuasion of the Pardon of all our Sins through the Blood and Merits of Jesus Christ, by a chearful Resignation of our Souls into the Hands of God, by a ready Dismission of our Bodies to the Grave in hope of a joyful Resurrection, by a quiet devolving the Concerns of our Families and Relatives to God, with a depending Trust that he will take care of 'em; and in a word, by a firm Persuasion of the Accomplishment of those Promises that are yet to be fulfil'd to the Church. In thus doing, *an Entrance shall be minister'd unto us abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

PAGE 18. line 10. for *infected* read *infested*.
 P. 40. l. 5. for *had r. ow'd*. P. 48. l. 2. for
found r. find.

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